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OVERSIGHT HEARING ON THE VISTA PROGRAM

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON SELECT EDUCATION

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND LABOR
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NINETY-NINTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

HEARING HELD IN WASHINGTON, DC, JUNE 18, 1985

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OVERSIGHT HEARING ON THE VISTA PROGRAM

TUESDAY, JUNE 18, 1985

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON SELECT EDUCATION,
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND LABOR,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 10 a.m., in room 2261, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Pat Williams (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Members present: Representatives Williams, Hayes, Martinez, Bartlett, and Goodling.

Staff present: S. Gray Garwood, staff director; Celinda Lake, legislative associate; Colleen Thompson, clerk; and Pat Morrissey, minority senior legislative associate.

Mr. WILLIAMS. Good morning. I call this oversight hearing of the Subcommittee on Select Education to order. This morning our hearing is concerning the VISTA Program. I want to welcome each of you to the hearing today in celebration of the 20th anniversary of VISTA, Volunteers in Service to America.

VISTA is the only full-time domestic antipoverty program in the Federal Government. VISTA volunteers work in their local communities for a subsistence allowance. The goal of VISTA has always been to eliminate poverty in the midst of plenty by opening to everyone the opportunity to work and the opportunity to live in decency and dignity.

Today, because of the dedication and energy of the volunteers and the flexibility of their efforts, VISTA has continued to respond to the needs of the poor in America with new initiatives for the homeless, the illiterate, the hungry and the unemployed. VISTA is tremendously cost effective, providing the catalyst for strong grass roots self-help efforts. According to a 1979 survey, 75 percent of the community projects remained after VISTA volunteers had left.

During the past 20 years, 80,000 people have answered VISTA's challenge. Volunteers have ranged in age from 20 to 81 and have come from all walks of life. Today, half of the volunteers are low income themselves and 70 percent are women.

VISTA has addressed the unmet human needs of low income Americans throughout the United States. In my home State of Montana, as a past supervisor of VISTA volunteers, I know first hand the contribution they can make. Montana has had more than 1,100 volunteers who have been responsible in major part for the first domestic violence project in the State, establishing a network of food banks across the State, the first migrant council, the first Indian health care conference, the first group home for the devel-

opmentally disabled, the research behind the first publicly funded kindergarten, the establishment of the Human Rights Commission—and I could go on.

Across America, the need for VISTA has increased rather than diminished. Today we see old poverty visiting young America. Currently, 35.2 million Americans live in poverty and another 12 million live at its threshold. Not since the year VISTA was created has the need been so great.

As the newest congressional study shows, one out of every five children lives in poverty. The need for food, shelter, basic education and jobs is staggering. VISTA can and does play a critical role in trying to solve those enormous American problems.

This hearing today is important to restate our congressional commitment to VISTA and to increase the awareness stated in a recent authorization hearing held by this committee about the important contribution that VISTA can make in dealing with new poverty challenges that face us in this time of constrained resources and pressing need.

Our first witness today is Senator John Rockefeller of West Virginia. Senator, if you will come forward, we will submit your entire testimony for the record. We are delighted to have you with us today. We know of your long commitment to like efforts.

Please proceed.

STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER IV, U.S. SENATOR IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA

Senator ROCKEFELLER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, very much.

I am very grateful to you for preparing and conducting this hearing to correspond with the 20th birthday of VISTA. I am pleased about it because it is my 48th birthday today, so I am celebrating the two together.

Mr. WILLIAMS. Happy birthday.

Senator ROCKEFELLER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was hoping you would say that. [Laughter.]

Mr. WILLIAMS. How does it feel to be twice as old, and then some, as VISTA?

Senator ROCKEFELLER. I was hoping you wouldn't say that. [Laughter.]

I want to speak personally, if I can, Mr. Chairman, because I think VISTA's history, of which I am very proud, parallels in some ways some of the experiences that I went through. Namely, my history is one in which primarily as a relatively young individual in his early twenties I moved from one State to another State, that being West Virginia, spent several years as a VISTA worker, got caught up in the work in the community, with the people, and the State, then decided to go into public service because of the VISTA experience, decided to remain in that State of West Virginia to live, to bring up a family, to put down roots, and to then pursue a career which turned out to be a public one.

Many, many VISTA volunteers across this country I think have had that similar kind of experience. Like the Peace Corps, which I also worked with, VISTA seems to me to be one of the great en-

riching legacies of public policy in our country and endures to the benefit of our country and the individuals who had the experience.

I have to say that Sargent Shriver and Bobby Kennedy played an enormous role in my own move into VISTA and, therefore, into West Virginia. I was working, as I indicated, with the Peace Corps in its very early days. Sargent Shriver was brilliantly leading that. After that I worked briefly with the State Department.

Mr. Chairman, I was absolutely dead set on a career in Asian affairs. I graduated from college in far eastern languages and history. I had spent 3 years in Japan studying the Japanese language. I was reasonably fluent at that time, could read, write and speak the language, and then went to Yale to study Chinese. When I went into the Peace Corps, it was with the idea of polishing my Asian skills and then go on to the State Department, to serve on the Indonesia desk. I was clearly going to be in that field just waiting to get my Ph.D. and get smart.

Then the Peace Corps and VISTA intervened. The public process intervened in those glorious early mid-60 years and totally changed my life. Bobby Kennedy told me about Action for Appalachian Youth at a time that I was looking to get into something of a grass roots nature. He told me that the organization was doing good work in West Virginia. I went and I looked at it, at several communities in West Virginia, including the one I finally went to. At just about that time Action for Appalachian Youth got one of its first grants from VISTA, which was then also being run by Sarge Shriver, and I became a VISTA worker.

I was assigned first to an office building—they didn't know what to do with me, and they were quite sure I didn't belong there. I rebelled against that and asked for a field position, got one and went to a community of about 100 people, a rural town called Emmons in the coal fields of West Virginia. I stayed there for nearly 2 years.

Now, just before Action for Appalachian Youth got that VISTA grant, President Johnson met with our first 20 VISTA volunteers—I was not one of those—and at a White House ceremony he told them it would be their job to guide the young, to comfort the sick, to encourage the downtrodden, to teach the skills which may lead them to a more satisfying and rewarding life. He said "No aspect of the War on Poverty will be more important than the work you do . . . your pay will be low; the conditions of your labor often will be difficult; but you will have the satisfaction of leading a great national effort and you will have the ultimate reward which comes to those who serve their fellow man."

That really was the secret for me and for so many other men and women, like yourself, Mr. Chairman, who just simply got wrapped up in something which was extraordinarily intense, deeply meaningful, new in concept, reflecting idealism and the hands-on instinct of those days. It could be very demoralizing at times, as you know. Much of what one tried did not work, but one kept trying. There were too many problems. There was too much to do and there was much too little time. But we were at least trying to solve problems. We were at least trying to open up the opportunity for people to live differently. We were excited, we were enriched, we

were challenging others to help, and we were all the better because of it.

I really believe that VISTA, which still lives, as the button that I wear says, exemplified that particular era. People at that time felt an obligation to the condition of society and to the direction of the country. We were inspired by the Kennedys and Martin Luther King, Jr., to try and make our great country even greater. And VISTA was a vehicle or, in my case, the vehicle for young people to act on those goals, goals which were often not very well defined, but which were very strong and very compelling.

VISTA asked us to make a 1-year commitment to work on the problems of a community—in my case, just one community, 150 people. The hope was we would make a difference in the lives of others. The result was that we, too, were changed and it influenced all the rest of our lives.

As for VISTA's impact on others, I know West Virginia's experience the best. I can't speak for other volunteers and for other places, but I do know that in the community where I worked it was first a question of becoming accepted myself. What was I doing there? Just because I said I wanted to be helpful, what did that really mean? What was my motivation? Why would I want to be there? There hadn't been a doctor or a policeman, for example, in that community for 5 years. Then I arrived, showed up, and said I wanted to be helpful. You know, what was I planning?

But we did get together. The community came together. We built a community center where at one point every day except Sunday there were morning, noon and night activities. We started a preschool program, the first of its kind in the State. We began a library. We transported kids to get dental work. We fought a year to get a school bus to take the senior high students to school, which was 45 minutes away. None of them were going to school, and for a very simple reason—no school bus. The board of education didn't send a school bus out there. Well, we lobbied, over-lobbied, overvociferously at first, got rejected, tried it again, were too meek the second time, went back the third time and hit the right note and we got a school bus and kids started going to school.

We started a baseball team. We made our own baseball field. Our record was zero wins and 24 defeats over 2 years because nobody had ever played baseball before. But that wasn't the point, either. I mean, we were doing things that hadn't been done before. We started music lessons. We worked very hard on promoting Pap smears, which was obviously not easy to introduce but important. In any event, it was a totally compelling period of a couple of years. The community probably was too small to sustain its own future but, nevertheless, there were good things that happened to certain individuals and it made it important.

Today there are only 22 VISTA volunteers in the State. They are throughtout the State. They work on literacy drives and they make a difference there. We have a serious literacy problem in West Virginia. A literacy program is run out of libraries, schools and community centers. Our VISTA volunteers are helping on that.

We have a mountaineer food bank in one of our central West Virginia counties, Braxton County. There is another group of

VISTA volunteers there who are coordinating the tasks of getting food out across the State to people who need it and need it a lot.

West Virginia is experiencing a rise in hunger. We have had and continue to have a very high unemployment rate. Also, there have been cutbacks in Federal funding for basic social services. All of this makes life more difficult and makes VISTA continuingly important.

So, Mr. Chairman, as I look back on VISTA, I return to this question that runs through my head all the time. If we have these problems in our country, whose job is it to worry about them? Is it the job of foundations and charities? Is it that of folks of good will in the community, i.e. the United Ways? Is it just government's job, our job, because you and I and other committee members are elected? It is just government, period, or can it be others? I think the answer is that it is the job of all of us. Somehow VISTA made it real to many young Americans, that it was part of their responsibility, "their" being the whole society. The whole society had to look out for the whole society and care for the whole society. That wasn't intervention, that wasn't mean, that wasn't bureaucratic. That was wonderful. That was compelling. That was urgent, and that was deeply fulfilling.

So I really hope that this VISTA anniversary will spur myself, will spur our national leaders, to think more about how to interest our young people, and not so young people, in service. The calls of the sixties, which were easier to make.—Those were easier times economically, more idealistic times.—Those calls are not made as frequently from leadership these days as they were then. Thus, it is harder for young people to get interested in others in the same way.

I think VISTA has a lot to offer still. I am very proud that it continues to exist. I think there are a lot of people who fight for it. When I was a VISTA volunteer, it was a very controversial thing to be. VISTA was not necessarily a very good word in West Virginia at that time. Now people really don't talk about VISTA very much. Maybe that's better, I don't know. But I think it is tremendously important that it continue, that it be aggressive and that it be helpful. It should continue to take that period of life between adolescence and maturity, which is such a crucial time for shaping one's view of one's self and of one's priorities and one's future, and to take that experience and let that work into the soul and consciencesses of young Americans, have it change their lives and have them do different things than they might otherwise have done.

It is a good program; it's a valuable program. Obviously, I care about it deeply because it has meant everything to me. I welcome the chance to come before you, Mr. Chairman, and your committee, and express my feelings.

[Prepared statement of Senator Rockefeller follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER IV, A U.S. SENATOR IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA

Thank you Mr. Chairman for inviting me to testify on this special day for VISTA, a program dear to my heart. I am honored to join this distinguished lineup in saluting VISTA's twentieth anniversary and wishing it many more years of success.

In thinking back about VISTA's history, Mr. Chairman, I realize that in a way my story embodies much of what the program tries to promote. I moved from one

state to another—West Virginia—spent two years as a VISTA worker fighting poverty with the local residents of a community, decide to make public service my career, and remained in West Virginia to live, raise my children, and pursue that career. Many, many other people have a similar story, starting with accepting a VISTA assignment in a state away from home and making that state home—and public service their career—for the rest of their lives.

A special part of this past was Bobby Kennedy's role in my move to West Virginia. When I was working for Peace Corps in its earlier days, under the superb leadership of Sargent Shriver, I became interested in getting more directly involved in tackling the problems of our own country. Bobby told me about the Action for Appalachian Youth in Community Group, located in Charleston, West Virginia, and the impressive efforts they were making to improve economic and living conditions in that area. Just about the same time, which was twenty years ago, the organization got one of the first VISTA grants, from the federal agency run also by Sarge, and so I became a VISTA worker. The only problem was that I was assigned to the office in the city, but I soon insisted on going out on my own to Emmons, a rural town of 100 people, back then, where I stayed for two years.

Not many months before Action for Appalachian Youth got that VISTA grant, President Johnson met with our country's first twenty VISTA volunteers. At a White House ceremony, he told them it would be their job "to guide the young, to comfort the sick, to encourage the downtrodden, to teach the skills which may lead to a more satisfying and rewarding life." He went on to say "No aspect of the War on Poverty will be more important than the work you do . . . Your pay will be low; the conditions of your labor often will be difficult. But you will have the satisfaction of leading a great national effort and you will have the ultimate reward which comes to those who serve their fellow man."

And that is how it was for me and the thousands of volunteers and staff involved in VISTA in its early life. It was an intense experience, and it could be demoralizing at times—there were too many problems, too much to do, and too little time. But we were at least trying to solve problems and open up the opportunity for everyone to live in decency and dignity. We were excited and enriched, indeed challenged to help others who were either left out or left behind.

VISTA exemplified the era in which it evolved. In the early 1960's, people felt the need to do far more than before about the condition of society and the direction of the country. We were inspired by the Kennedys to try to make our great country even greater.

VISTA was the vehicle for young peole to act on these goals. It asked us to make a one-year commitment to work on the problems of one community. The hope was that we would make a difference in the lives of the less fortunate. The result was that we, too, were changed—and it influenced the rest of our lives.

As for VISTA's impact on others, I know West Virginia's experience the best. In its earlier years, hundreds of volunteers were distributed in communities throughout the state. Their mission was to ameliorate the effects of the poverty in Appalachia. In Emmons, that meant that I worked with the community to

Like in the rest of the country, VISTA's size and, therefore, the score of its impact has shrunk considerably in West Virginia. Now, there are only 22 VISTA volunteers in the state.

But they are still spread throughout the state, working directly with low-income people and helping them to meet some basic human needs as well as bolster their ability to get a job and provide for those needs on their own. For example, a group of VISTAs are in various communities recruiting hundreds of volunteers for a literacy drive in the state. West Virginia has an adult literacy rate of over 50 percent, which causes both terrible personal difficulties and makes it hard for employers to consider them for most jobs. Our literacy program, run out of libraries, schools, and community centers, is getting a lot of help from VISTA in pursuing this important mission.

Our Mountaineer Food Bank in Gassaway in another group that has VISTA volunteers. Several VISTAs are coordinating some of the organizational tasks of this project, which serves as a central distribution mechanism for pantries and soup kitchens throughout the state. West Virginia is experiencing a rise in hunger, with its unemployment rate of 14 percent and the cut-backs in federal funding for basic social services. The food bank plays a critical role in providing decent nutrition to countless families.

In looking back on VISTA, I return to questions that often run through my head when thinking about the fervent period of the 1960s. Whose job is it to worry about the people left out and left behind? Is it the job of charity? Is it the job of government? Or is it everyone's job? And how do we get everyone to make the effort?

For twenty years, through VISTA, many young Americans have decided it was in part their job. While their friends were settling down and getting started on their careers, some individuals instead focused on the larger problems of society and entered VISTA to do what they could. They got involved in community service and discovered its rich rewards. And many shaped their lives—literally changed their career goals and plans—to remain deeply involved in service. For that reason, I continue to meet West Virginians who came to the state years ago as VISTA volunteers and remained, still in public service, only now they are a director of a rural health clinic, the city's chief of economic development, or in some other leadership position in public and social service.

Today, unfortunately, almost no one is making the clarion call we heard in the 1960s urging young people to join VISTA or enter the arena of public service to grapple with society's problems. And yet, poverty, illiteracy, hunger are again on the rise in America. As a country, we live with infant mortality and disease levels that other civilized countries would find appalling. We proclaim prosperity while more than 8.4 million Americans remain without a job, and my state suffers unemployment at near twice the level of the national average.

I hope VISTA's anniversary will spur our national leaders to think more about how to interest the young in service. I worry that we are leaving the problems to fewer and fewer people, and losing precious time in tapping this young generation to take part in this work.

As a Senator with appreciation for VISTA's impact on leading me here, I want to help in some way to renew the call to public service. VISTA still exists, and is as relevant as it was twenty years ago with its mission of involving people in the job of bettering our great country. And there are plenty of other good ideas, some even that are being tried in individual cities and states, to recruit young people to devote a year or two to community service in return for a stipend and, in some cases, financial help with their education.

The period of life between adolescence and maturity is a critical time for shaping one's view of oneself and the rest of society. Lifetime values and principles are informed. Decisions are made about crucial next steps—whether to go to law school or work for the neighborhood crime prevention project—that shape one's course in life.

Let us reach people in this period, and give them more reason and encouragement to have a stake in society at-large and in the well-being of others less fortunate. To this generation who seems so focused on personal attainment, we must open up their eyes so that they see the world like Bobby Kennedy did when he said: "The gross national product does not include the beauty of our poetry or the strength of our marriages, the intelligence of our public debate or the integrity of our public officials. It allows neither for the justice in our courts, nor for the justness of our dealings with each other. The gross national product measures neither wit nor our courage, neither our wisdom nor our learning, neither our compassion nor our devotion to our country. It measures everything, in short, except that which makes life worthwhile."

My experience with VISTA helped me to recognize what makes life worthwhile. And so it has for many thousands of Americans. It is up to us to sustain VISTA to continue its enriching influence on individuals and on the nation.

Mr. WILLIAMS. Thank you very much, Senator.

Mr. Bartlett.

Mr. BARTLETT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator, we very much appreciate you being here and your obvious personal testimony to VISTA, as well as your professional testimony with your role in the Senate.

I would like to explore with you a little bit some of the things which you raised, not strictly related to VISTA, but in looking back at the whole war on poverty experience, starting in 1965 or 1966, which has had mixed results, and I wonder if you are among those—many in your party and many in my party—who are rethinking that experience as we look towards the future, as to whether we ought to change some of our ways of doing things, as to whether the massive increases in transfer payments—someone estimated a four-time increase adjusted for inflation from 1968 to 1980—and yet the same percentage of the population still lives in

poverty. Those who live in poverty, many would say, are worse off now than they were in the mid-1960s, the quality of life has deteriorated, a significant breakup of families, significantly less upward mobility, fewer employment opportunities.

My question is open ended and you may answer it any way you choose. Are you among those who are rethinking those kinds of massive transfer payments in hopes of replacing them more with incentives, with enterprise zones, changing public housing, for example, into more emergency housing as opposed to inter-generational housing, or would you advocate we do more of what we have done in the last 20 years?

Senator ROCKEFELLER. I suppose that philosophically I am reluctant to relieve individual Americans of what I feel is the responsibility, or at least the opportunity to have the responsibility, of committing part of their lives to service. I tend to separate VISTA from the programs you just mentioned. You indicate you want to go beyond VISTA—I want to stay on VISTA, partly because this is VISTA's birthday and partly it's where I have very personal experience.

I separate VISTA in some ways from the ongoing governmental programs. When I think of VISTA, my first thought isn't of transfer payments or food stamps. Yes, food stamps came into being while I was a VISTA volunteer, and yes, they did make a difference. And are they in excess in West Virginia? I would tend to doubt it. Is there some cheating and misuse? Of course, there is always some of that in anything. We have seen that recently in the defense contract business as well as in the business of poverty.

I know in West Virginia—I was Governor of West Virginia up until this past January for 8 years—there was always this perception that those who received welfare were cheating, that if you got rid of welfare some people would go out and find work. We did a very careful run on that and we found a cheat rate, so to speak, of between two and three percent. Now, that was one of the lower ones in the Nation. I didn't really care about the Nation. I cared about West Virginia. I took some pride, not personal, but sort of generic in that fact, that basically in West Virginia, people who have a chance to work want to work. Ours is a State filled with people who are looking through newspapers and lining up at employment job service stations and other things day after day, after reasonable people would have quit long ago. They try and they make an effort.

Should Government Programs change? I suppose. But if the philosophy underneath is that somehow you take the Emmonses, the community that I went to, and similar communities of today, and have somebody walk in and say; OK, you people, there is opportunity out there. Go get it. I would say that would be a fairly tough message through which to improve their lives. I think the human contact factor, hands-on relationships, still are enormously important. Hence, VISTA is still enormously important. Hence, the Peace Corps, for different reasons, is still enormously important.

Mr. BARTLETT. I appreciate your answer and there is some merit to what you say. I do want to clarify that my question was not related to welfare cheating. In fact, in my judgment, the single groups of Americans who are the most abused by the welfare

system are the welfare recipients themselves. That is, of course, the difficulty, in that it has tended to hold people down as opposed to lifting them up. As we go into the next 20 years, I think those will be the issues we'll explore.

On the issue of VISTA, would you then place VISTA at a substantially higher priority as signified by either the amount of money we're spending on it or the emphasis? It's a $17 million a year budget. For example, we spend $200 million a year on Federal aid to library construction for communities, even though some 95 percent of all our Nation's communities have access to libraries. Would you reverse those priorities? Would you place a higher emphasis on VISTA than on some of the other programs?

Senator ROCKEFELLER. Again, that's a hard question. I wouldn't replace $200 million of library service money beause I think that program is also enormously important for a whole different set of reasons, sometimes overlapping a bit.

I guess my concern is that I want to see VISTA get all the resources it can get. The most important thing I want to see is VISTA survive. Because in an era of cutbacks, sort of an era of ethic of cutbacks, VISTA is a program which is constantly vulnerable. This is its 20th birthday. This room ought to be packed with celebrants. It isn't because VISTA is relatively silent. It shouldn't be, but that's the way it works. So that having VISTA survive and continue, waiting for a more prosperous era where perhaps more money can be given, is important to me.

Mr. BARTLETT. Thank you, sir.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. WILLIAMS. Mr. Martinez.

Mr. MARTINEZ. I have no questions but just a comment that I agree with you, that many times, when programs are silent and are effective, they get no recognition as to their importance. There should be more notice given to them. We have a similar situation in the Job Corps, a very effective program for 20 years, and we have a move to do away with it. We are limited in our resources for these programs, but I think we should do as much as we can for each of them.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. WILLIAMS. Mr. Hayes.

Mr. HAYES. Just one question—and I apologize for being late, but this is my second hearing already today.

Do you feel that the need for VISTA is as great today as it was when you were the director of VISTA back in 1970?

Senator ROCKEFELLER. Yes, I do.

Mr. HAYES. Why?

Senator ROCKEFELLER. To clarify your question, my service was prior to 1970. To answer your question, I feel that the health of VISTA relates in some way to the health of the American soul. If VISTA is not healthy, then I worry about America's soul. We need VISTA's work in rural Appalachia, in worked-out coal mining communities, in urban areas, housing projects on Indian reservations or wherever. This is an era when people are so conscious of jobs. Should they go through high school and college? People are concentrated on what their next step is going to be, what income level are

they going to go into, what profession can they pick which will land them at such and such an income level.

I think of that wonderful quote by Bobby Kennedy, about the gross national product. There is a feeling today that if the gross national product is getting better then people are feeling better. So many pick their politics according to the condition of the gross national product. But their soul isn't maybe as active. The gross national product doesn't talk about compassion, love of country, wit or wisdom, learning or sense of service. Something has got to call that out of our people, something has got to appeal to our young people, to ask of them to do, to give. Service comes in many ways, but I think VISTA serving in this country, hands on, has to be one of the most important ways.

Mr. HAYES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. WILLIAMS. As we celebrate these past two decades, it is always asked how successful has VISTA been. It seems to me that part of the measure of that success is to determine what had gone before. You mentioned in your testimony, Senator, that the difficulties that accompanied daily life in many places in America were the responsibility of all of us. The problem, it seemed to me, was that the Federal Government interpreted that responsibility in the following ways:

One, the attack on it had to be entirely voluntary, and second, the order of our economy, that is, the fruits of capitalism, would eventually somehow lift these people out of their difficulties and misery, hunger and despair. We went 180 years in this land without making a concerted national, centralized, Federal, organized, institutionalized effort to combine the fruits of voluntarism and capitalism and caring and humanity and education and all the rest in some way that would help lift these people into the American mainstream and middle class.

Like my friend and colleague, Mr. Bartlett, I, too—and I know from your past, Senator, you, too, are trying to find always better ways to deal with great American dilemmas. But it seems to me that to return to the days of volunteerism and dependency on the economy to somehow magically lift all the boats is wrong. In reviewing the work of VISTA, we should look closely at what had gone before if we're really going to be able to determine the successes of America's efforts against poverty, including VISTA.

You have brought much to this effort, Senator, and I think many Americans are aware of that. You have brought much to our hearing today and we are delighted that you took the time to be with us. Thank you very much.

Senator ROCKEFELLER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. WILLIAMS. We will ask our colleague and pal, Sil Conte, and the first panel, made up of Catherine D'Amato, Carol Khosrovi Marshall, Nancy Crowther, and Shayne Del Cohen, to all come forward and take chairs at the witness table.

We appreciate seeing all of you here today. Sil, we understand that you want to introduce one of the members of the panel.

Mr. CONTE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and members of the committee. At the outset, Pat, I want to thank you and the members of the subcommittee for the opportunity to be part of this oversight hearing on the VISTA program.

I am very, very pleased to introduce to you Catherine D'Amato. She is the executive director of the Western Massachusetts Food Bank in Hadley. Ms. D'Amato has a very distinguished career in food marketing and banking, and after developing and managing the San Francisco food bank, she moved to my rural district to manage the western Massachusetts Food Bank, now in its 4th year of operation.

With the help of many VISTA volunteers, she has coordinated food bank patrons, worked to secure contributions, help to set up the outreach programs in the surrounding countries, the program has grown tremendously, now distributing over two millon pounds of food annually to needy people in our area of the country.

Mr. Chairman, as you know, this is the 20th anniversary of VISTA. It gives us an opportunity to assess and to praise the valuable contribution the VISTA volunteers have made to America. As Ms. D'Amato would tell you, because she's an expert in the field, VISTA is working, at least it is working in my district. With this subcommittee's help, and perhaps some money from my Appropriations Committee, VISTA will continue its history of service to our people.

I want to thank you ever so much for allowing me to be here today and for giving Ms. D'Amato the thoughtful testimony she certainly deserves. I am sorry that I am going to have to leave because I have another committee hearing.

Mr. WILLIAMS. We appreciate your being here this morning and your good introduction of Ms. D'Amato.

Ms. D'Amato, you may proceed.

STATEMENTS OF CATHERINE D'AMATO, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS FOOD BANK; CAROL KHOSROVI MARSHALL, FORMER VISTA DIRECTOR; NANCY CROWTHER, VISTA VOLUNTEER, COALITION OF TEXANS WITH DISABILITIES; AND SHAYNE DEL COHEN, FORMER VISTA VOLUNTEER, INTER-TRIBAL COUNCIL, RENO, NV

Ms. D'AMATO. Thank you, sir, and thank you, Sil.

As executive director of the Western Massachusetts Food Bank, which is a certified member of the national food bank network, Second Harvest, I am pleased to present testimony to the committee today.

Over the past 20 years VISTA has been authorized to provide volunteers to community and neighborhood nonprofit organizations. It has been the intention of VISTA to place these volunteers in communities where malnutrition, inadequate housing, poor education and limited oportunities exist. The commitment of VISTA to change these conditons throughout the United States has seen the placement of volunteers from all walks of life to work within these areas.

Even though the mission given to VISTA by Congress years ago still remains prevalent, it has been, in my opinion, and continues to be the volunteers who have greatly caused and effected changes in the lives of so many. Their dedication has touched the lives of millions who are malnourished and without food, the lives of millions growing up and living lifetimes in inadequate housing, the

lives of millions who are poorly educated. They have also touched the lives of so many people with limited or no access to greater opportunities.

These changes have not always meant righting the wrongs felt by so many residents of this country. More often than not, the changes have been small victories, the type of victory that impacts the local community, the type of victory that is very personal and very private. It is this dedication to the lives of those in poverty that has built a foundation on which today VISTA stands on firm ground.

Throughout the past 10 years I have worked with community and neighborhood organizations in both rural and urban settings to provide the basic provisions of food, clothing and shelter to those experiencing poverty. During that time I have worked with or supervised VISTA volunteers. At present, six volunteers are working within the Western Massachusetts Food Bank. Western Massachusetts is predominantly rural and yet it has large pockets of urban development.

Like many other communities across this country, there are staggering statistics which exemplify the accelerated rate of poverty over this last decade. For example, in the city of Holyoke, one of the most urban pockets of western Mass, the city maintains the highest infant mortality rate for the State. Factories have been closing down or moving south, and we have seen rural poverty on the increase. In 1984, the Food Research and Action Commission here in Washington documented an increased usage of emergency food pantries by 20 percent. This was accompanied in our own area by an increase of 200 percent. Another example of this increased usage, in 1981, when we began the food bank, there were a handful of emergency food providers. At present there are 25 with many more on the way.

The food bank serves more than 200 nonprofit agencies in western Mass with donated products that would otherwise be destroyed or wasted. In 1984, over 75 million pounds of food was distributed nationally through Second Harvest to charitable organizations feeding the poor.

With the increased growth of food banking has come the increased need for volunteers. Nationally, over 100 volunteers are serving in food banks or working with nonprofit agencies associated with food banks. Their projects include volunteer coordinaton, monitoring of member agencies, building community networks of direct and informational resources, and establishing programs to provide emergency services. Without VISTA volunteers, food banks would not be able to provide the vital service of donated product and support services.

It is estimated that for every dollar donated to a food bank, an average of $30 worth of services is provided. The presence of VISTA volunteers, coupled with community volunteers, has greatly contributed to this profound in-kind statistic. The reality is, without them, it could not be done.

As I reflect on how well the VISTA Program is working, I would like to share with you may experience in the New England region. I have seen the poverty focus of the program examplified through a variety of creative projects, food banking being one of them. The

State and regional staff have been professional and interested in what happens on a local level. The bureacracy at times is difficult to sift through, and at times the paperwork alone is burdensome. Yet the efficiency of the operation depends on this complex system.

An observation is that the general public is not aware that VISTA is still alive and working. On several occasions, when the public became aware of VISTA volunteers working in our food bank, they generally commented, expressing their surprise that VISTA was still in existence. Over the years the cutbacks on domestic spending have taken their toll on VISTA, and thus on the programs served by VISTA volunteers. I am very pleased with the recent approval of the 3-year funding commitment.

One of the most significant changes within the history of VISTA, in my opinion, was the move from national recruitment to local recruitment. As a VISTA volunteer and a VISTA supervisor, I have found this approach more effective in meeting the needs of our programs. Local recruitment has provided individuals who are aware of local and regional poverty issues. More importantly, often following their year of service, the volunteers move into other positions in the community, providing continued service in their area of expertise. This consistency also provides credibility for the service organization in the eyes of those being served.

The role of VISTA as a national program is going to become increasingly more significant in the years to come. The reasons for poverty are becoming more evident and thus poverty and the lives it captures are becoming more visible. The commitment to eliminate poverty and poverty-related human, social and environmental problems is an undertaking which manifests itself through the involvement of dedicated men and women across this country.

In these times when so many programs are being cut back, the presence of VISTA as a program sponsored by Congress is as necessary now as it was originally intended. VISTA was created in 1964 continue to plague this country. The presence of poverty has been documented more times in the last 20 years than I would like to recall. More importantly, within the last 4 years there were 11 reports documenting widespread hunger and in one case claiming hunger to be an epidemic in this country. It is the hope of those in the food banking industry that the causes of poverty will continue to be addressed by VISTA. It is also our hope that VISTA will address the enormous increase of hunger and hunger-related concerns.

In closing, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of the national food bank network. Over 80 food banks belong to this national network serving this Nation's hungry and homeless. The contribution of VISTA volunteers in this effort has proven to be both effective and priceless.

Thank you.

[Prepared statement of Catherine D'Amato follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CATHERINE D'AMATO, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS FOOD BANK, HADLEY, MA

As the Executive Director of the Western Massachusetts Food Bank, a certified member of the national foodbank network, Second Harvest, I am pleased to present

testimony on the VISTA program to the U.S House of Representatives Subcommittee on Select Education.

Over the past twenty years VISTA has been authorized to provide Volunteers to community and neighborhood non-profit organizations. It has been the intention of VISTA to place Volunteers in communities where malnutrition, inadequate housing, poor education and limited opportunities exist. The commitment of VISTA to change these conditions throughout the United States has seen the placement of Volunteers from all walks of life to work within these areas. Even though the mission given to VISTA by Congress years ago still remains prevalent, it has been and continues to be the Volunteers who have greatly caused and effected changes in the lives of so many. Their dedication has touched the lives of millions who are malnourished and without food; the lives of millions growing up and living lifetimes in inadequate housing; the lives of millions poorly educated; and the lives of so many people with limited or no access to greater opportunities. These changes have not always meant righting the wrongs felt by so many residents of this country. More often than not the changes have been small victories; the type of victory that impacts the local community; the type of victory that is personal and private. It is this dedication to the lives of those in poverty that has built a foundation on which today VISTA stands on firm ground.

Throughout the past ten years I have worked with community and neighborhood organizations in both rural and urban settings to provide the basic provisions of food, clothing, and shelter to those experiencing poverty. During that time I have worked with or supervised VISTA Volunteers. At present six Volunteers are working with the Western Massachusetts Food Bank. Western Massachusetts is predominantly rural with pockets of urban development. Like many other communities across this country, staggering statistics exemplify the accelerated rate of poverty over the last decade. The city of Holyoke, one of the urban pockets of western Massachusetts maintains the highest infant mortality rate in the state; factories are closing down or moving south; rural poverty is on the increase. In 1984 the Food Research and Action Commission documented an increased usage of emergency food pantries by 20%. This national statistic was accompanied by the local emergency food pantry usage increasing 200%. Another example of increased usage in western Massachusetts points to a total of five emergency pantries in 1981 where now, in 1985, over 25 exist.

The Western Massachusetts Food Bank serves over 200 non-profit agencies with donated food that would otherwise be destroyed or wasted. In 1984, over 75 million pounds of food was distributed nationally to charitable organizations feeding the poor. With the increased growth of food banking has come the increased need for Volunteers. Nationally over 100 Volunteers are serving in food banks with non-profit agencies associated with food banks. Their projects include volunteer coordination, monitoring member agencies, building community networks of direct and informational resources, and establishing programs to provide emergency services. Without VISTA Volunteers food banks would not be able to provide the vital service of donated product and support services. It is estimated that for every dollar donated to a food bank an average of $30.00 worth of services is provided. The presence of Vista Volunteers coupled with community volunteers has greatly contributed to this profound in-kind statistic. Without their help it simply could not be done.

As I reflect on how well the VISTA program is working I would like to share with you my experiences of working within the New England region. I have seen the poverty focus of the program exemplified through a variety of creative projects, food banking being one of them. The state and regional staff have been professional and interested in what happens on the local level. The bureaucracy at times is difficult to sift through and at times the paper work alone is burdensome. And yet the efficiency of the operation depends on this complex system. An observation is that the general public is not aware that VISTA is still alive and working. On several occasions when the public became aware of VISTA Volunteers working in the food bank they generally commented, expressing their surprise that VISTA was still in existence. Over the years the cutbacks on domestic spending have taken their toll on VISTA and thus on the programs served by VISTA Volunteers. I am very pleased with the recent approval of a three year funding commitment which will greatly enhance VISTA's credibility.

One of the most significant changes within the history of VISTA was the move from national recruitment and placement of Volunteers to local recruitment and placement. As a VISTA supervisor I have found this approach more effective in meeting the needs of our programs. Local recruitment has provided individuals who are aware of local and regional poverty issues. Often following their year of service the Volunteers move into other positions in the community, providing continued

service in their area of expertise. This consistency also provides credibility for the service organization in the eyes of the people they serve.

The role of VISTA as a national program will become increasingly more significant over the next five years. The reasons for poverty are becoming more evident and thus poverty and the lives it captures are becoming more visible. The commitment to eliminate poverty and poverty-related human, social, and environmental problems is an undertaking which manifests itself through the involvement of women and men sharing such dedication. In these times when so many programs are being cut back, the presence of VISTA as a program sponsored by Congress is a necessary now as was originally intended. The reasons for which VISTA was created in 1964 continue to plague this country. The presence of poverty has been documented more times in the last twenty years than I would like to recall. More importantly within the last four years there were eleven reports documenting widespread hunger and in one case claiming hunger to be an epidemic in this country. It is our hope that the causes of poverty will continue to be addressed by VISTA. It is also our hope that VISTA will address the enormous increase of hunger and hunger related concerns over the next five years.

In closing I would like to thank the Subcommittee on Select Education for their invitation to testify on behalf of the national food bank network. Over eighty food banks belong to the national network serving this nation's hungry and homeless. The contribution of VISTA Volunteers in this effort has proven to be both effective and priceless.

Mr. WILLIAMS. Thank you.

We have on our panel today a former Director of VISTA, Carol Khosrovi Marshall. We would be pleased now to hear from you.

Ms. MARSHALL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased to be here to talk about VISTA. I suppose of all the things I like to do, talking about VISTA is one of my favorites, so I come whenever I'm asked. Although I was thinking, as you heard earlier from a former VISTA volunteer from West Virginia, who was so eloquent, there is very little else I can say, though he did strike a note in me when he mentioned that being a VISTA volunteer in the sixties was a very controversial position to be in. It reminded me that to be a director of VISTA in the Nixon administration was also a very controversial position to be in. [Laughter.]

I will speak to you a bit about my own feelings about volunteerism and about the VISTA Program itself.

I approach VISTA as one who has had a long and deep interest in self help antipoverty programs and also one who feels stongly about the role of volunteerism in American life.

A vital way in which Americans have always expressed their loving care and concern to neighbors, community and country, is through positive volunteer activity. In a real sense, the very fate of our country depends upon what each one of us brings to the task of being an American. Of course, always there has been, and probably there will always continue to be, a contrast between our reality and our potential as a nation. But for those millions of us who care, the challenge of striving for our very best is acted out every day by those who volunteer their time and effort toward making things a little bit better.

Volunteerism, of course, is a local function. In its simplest terms, it is neighbors who care helping neighbors in need. That is what VISTA is all about. Volunteers In Service To America, VISTA. It's as simple as that. VISTA's mission is to mobilize resources by supporting the efforts of community members in pursuit of goals they set for themselves.

There are many strengths unique to VISTA which you will hear about today, some of which you have already heard about. I would

like to emphasize a few because, although the program is now 20 years old, we need to remind ourselves of its role in order to rededicate ourselves to its purpose.

One of VISTA's strengths is its antipoverty focus. VISTA was born in the sixties when this committee created the War on Poverty Program. At that time I was assistant to a member of the Education and Labor Committee, Bob Taft, and therefore, had an opportunity to participate in the process. I remember well the commitment in the country at that time toward the need for a national effort to eliminate poverty in America. Since then we have learned many things about which antipoverty programs work, which types of approaches do not work. But the commitment of the American people to help those in need is as strong today as it was then. Americans continue to actively support programs that work—and I would like to emphasize that—programs that work. VISTA, I have come to tell you, is a program that works.

Because there is less money available today for Federal antipoverty programs, I think it is also important to point out the incredible cost effectiveness of the VISTA approach. The most recent evaluation of VISTA showed that the average VISTA volunteer touches the lives of 200 low-income individuals and also is responsible for recruiting 15 additional volunteers at the local level for further antipoverty work. The leverage effect of the program is just enormous. Each volunteer leverages $3.50 in funds and services for every dollar appropriated from Federal funds. How many other Federal programs have used Federal funds as effectively as that?

When I was Director of VISTA there were nearly 5,000 volunteers. Today there are only 2,400. Let's look at the reality of this situation. Each VISTA volunteer costs the Federal Government $7,700, but each volunteer mobilizes an additional $27,000 in funds and services. Therefore, if Congress raised the volunteer level just back up to the 5,000 level by appropriating an additional $20 million, $70 million additional dollars would be mobilized for antipoverty efforts.

I am a Republican, as you know, and admittedly tight with the taxpayers' money, but to me, this is a bargain no matter how you look at it. At a time when the poverty statistics are so high, we need more volunteers to work on hunger, employment and health problems. We need more opportunities for people to serve their country. We need a larger, not a smaller, VISTA program.

Another important strength of the program is the mixture of volunteers—not only young and old, poor and nonpoor, but also national and locally recruited volunteers. In the early years of VISTA all volunteers were nationally recruited. Then we saw a need for locally recruited volunteers and the "community volunteer" concept was developed. I am proud that during my administration of the program I greatly expanded the community volunteer concept. However, the pendulum, in my view, has now swung too far in the other direction and now all VISTA volunteers are community volunteers. I believe I have a disagreement with the other woman on the panel, so it is a good time to hear both views.

I think this policy should be changed. I think there is great value in national recruitment. Because there is no national recruitment today, many people are not aware that VISTA still exists, as the

former witness has testified to, and those who would like to volunteer often do not know where or how to apply. We must not cut off the opportunity for those in America who want to help. As I said earlier, our job is to encourage more people to volunteer, not fewer.

Also, we must realize that a strong volunteer force is one that is diverse in nature. Special skills are needed in one community which are sometimes only available outside the community. In addition, the introduction of people from outside the community gives a different perspective which often permits the development of a more creative solution for special problems. Then, too, there is the intangible but important plus on the part of the poverty community to know that there are others who care about their future. Yes, it is time to return to a middle ground of a mix of national and community volunteers working side by side in poverty communities all around the country.

I just must point out that if it were not for a national recruitment program in the early days of VISTA, your first witness, the Senator from West Virginia, would not have been a VISTA volunteer.

There are 80,000 former VISTA volunteers in the country today. While serving in VISTA, these 80,000 volunteers made positive contributions to the lives of millions of America's poor and disadvantaged. Their VISTA experience has had a lasting impact on their lives and most of them continue to work toward these same goals in their current activities.

For some VISTA's, their service represented their first exposure to community service, as well as to poverty. For most, VISTA represented an opportunity to gain job experience, self confidence, and leadership skills, while at the same time finding local and lasting solutions to community problems. For a significant number of low income, locally-recruited volunteers, VISTA service represented a first chance to become problem-solvers rather than to be identified as the problem.

A key result of VISTA's work has been substantial new opportunities for individual development and leadership, increased citizen involvement, and strengthened community partnerships for progress.

A recent survey of former volunteers showed that the overwhelming majority have chosen to continue working in antipoverty, social service, and advocacy programs. Many former volunteers are now in leadership positions in neighborhood groups, statewide advocacy organizations, community action agencies, corporations, local, State and Federal government entities, foundations, community based antipoverty programs, volunteer programs, and social service agencies in both urban and rural communities throughout the country. I imagine, if your experience is like mine, you run into former VISTA volunteers in all walks of life who are trying to make their community and their country better. I certainly see them almost every day in my work.

For those who have chosen other careers outside the poverty community, their VISTA experience has impacted upon their contributions within the business world and in their own community volunteer experiences. How can we measure the enormous impact of 80,000 persons in America today who approach their jobs with a

knowledge of America's poverty problems and a commitment to solve these problems in whatever situation they now find themselves?

In conclusion, may I say that, to me, VISTA, in advocating the important principles of self help, self reliance, and local decisonmaking, embodies the approach that in the end will be the only way we will ever permanently improve the lives of our Nation's disadvantaged. VISTA, as I have said before, is a very simple concept. It offers hope that together we can solve our problems. We must remember that without hope there is no escape from poverty or dispair. VISTA is the very symbol of hope. VISTA must live and VISTA must be expanded because Volunteers In Service To America works.

Thank you so much.

[Prepared statement of Carol Khosrovi Marshall follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CAROL KHOSROVI MARSHALL, FORMER VISTA DIRECTOR

I am pleased to be here today to speak about the VISTA program. My interest in the program began in the 60's and I was honored to be appointed Director of VISTA in 1970. I was the last VISTA Director in the Office of Economic Opportunity before VISTA was absorbed into the ACTION Agency.

I approach VISTA as one who has long had a deep interest in self help anti-poverty programs and also as one who feels strongly about the role of volunteerism in American life.

A vital way in which Americans have always expressed their loving care and concern to neighbors, community and country is through positive volunteer activity. In a real sense the very fate of our country depends upon what each of us brings to the task of being an American. Always there has been and will probably always continue to be a contrast between our reality and our potential as a nation. But for those millions of us who care, the challenge of striving for our best is acted out everyday by those who volunteer their time and effort toward making things a little bit better.

Volunteerism is of course, a local function. In its simplest terms, it is neighbors who care helping neighbors in need. And that is what VISTA is all about. Volunteers In Service To America. VISTA. It is simple as that. VISTA's mission is to mobilize resources by supporting the efforts of community members in pursuit of goals they set for themselves.

There are many strengths unique to the VISTA program which you will hear about today. I would like to emphasize a few because although the program is now 20 years old, we need to remind ourselves of its role in order to rededicate ourselves to its purpose.

One of VISTA's strengths is its anti-poverty focus. VISTA was born in the 60's when this Committee created the War on Poverty program. At that time I was an assistant to a member of the Education and Labor Committee, Bob Taft, and therefore had an opportunity to participate in the process. I remember well the committment in the country at that time toward the need for a national effort to eliminate poverty in America. We have learned many things in the past 20 years about which anti-poverty approaches work and which do not, bu the committment of the American people to help those in need is as strong today as it was then. Americans continue to actively support programs that work and VISTA is a program that works.

Because there is less money available today for federal anti-poverty programs, I think it also important to point out the incredible cost effectiveness of the VISTA approach. The most recent evaluation of VISTA showed that the average VISTA volunteer touches the lives of 200 low income individuals and also is responsible for recruiting 15 additional volunteers at the local level for further anti-poverty work. The leverage effect of the program is enormous. Each volunteer leverages $3½ in funds and services for every $1 appropriated from federal funds. How many other federal programs have used funds so effectively?

When I was Director of Vista there were nearly 5,000 volunteers. Today there are only 2,400. Let's look at the reality of the situation. Each VISTA volunteer costs the federal government $7,700. But each volunteer mobilizes an additional $27,000. Therefore, if Congress raised the volunteer level back to 5,000 by appropriating an additional $20 million, 70 million additional dollars would be mobilized for anti-pov-

erty efforts. I am a Republican and admittedly tight with taxpayer's money, but to me this is a bargain no matter how you look at it. At a time when the poverty statistics are so high, we need more volunteers to work on hunger, employment, and health programs. We need more opportunities for people to serve their country. We need a larger, not smaller Vista program.

Another important strength of the program is the mixture of volunteers—not only young and old, poor and non-poor, but also national and locally recruited volunteers. In the early years of VISTA all volunteers were nationally recruited. Then we saw a need for locally recruited volunteers and the "Community Volunteer" concept was developed. I am proud that during my administration of the program, I greatly expanded the Community Volunteer concept. Today, however, the pendulum has swung too far in the other direction and now all VISTA volunteers are Community Volunteers. This, I believe, should be changed. There is great value in national recruitment. Because there is no national recruitment today many people are not aware that VISTA still exists and those who would like to volunteer often do not know where or how to apply. We must not cut off the opportunity for those who want to help. Our job is to encourage more people to volunteer, not fewer. Also we must realize that a strong volunteer force is one that is diverse in nature. Special skills are needed in one community which are not always available in another location. In addition, the introduction of people from outside the community gives a different perspective which often permits the development of a more creative solution for special problems. Then too there is the intangible, but important, plus on the part of the poverty community of knowing there are others who care about their future. Yes, it is time for a return to a middle ground of a mix of national and Community Volunteers working side by side in poverty communities all around the country.

There are 80,000 former VISTA volunteers in the country today. While serving in VISTA, these 80,000 volunteers made positive contributions to the lives of millions of America's poor and disadvantaged. Their VISTA experience has had a lasting impact on their lives and most of them continue to work toward these same goals in their current activities.

For some VISTAs, their service represented their first exposure to community service, as well as to poverty. For most, VISTA represented an opportunity to gain job experience, self-confidence and leadership skills while at the same time finding local and lasting solutions to community problems. For a significant number of low income, locally recruited volunteers, VISTA service represented a first chance to become problem solvers rather than to be identified as the problem. A key result of VISTA's work has been substantial new opportunities for individual development and leadership, increased citizen involvement and strengthened community partnerships for progress.

A recent survey of former volunteers showed that the overwhelming majority have chosen to continue working in anti-poverty, social service and advocacy programs. Many former volunteers are now in leadership positions in neighborhood groups, statewide advocacy organizations, community action agencies, corporations, local, state and federal government entities, foundations, community based anti-poverty programs, volunteer programs and social service agencies in both urban and rural communities throughout the country. And for those who have chosen other careers outside the poverty community, their VISTA experience has impacted upon their contributions within the business world and in their own community volunteer experiences. How can we measure the enormous impact of 80,000 persons in America who approach their jobs each day with a knowledge of America's poverty problems and a committment to solve these problems in whatever situation they now find themselves?

In conclusion may I say that to me Vista, in advocating the important principles of self help, self reliance and local decision making, embodies the approach that in the end will be the only way we will ever permanently improve the lives of our nation's disadvanteged. VISTA is a simple concept. It offers hope that together we can solve our problems. And we must remember that without hope there is no escape from poverty or despair. VISTA is the very symbol of hope. VISTA must live and VISTA must be expanded because Volunteers in Service to America works!

Mr. WILLIAMS. Thank you, Ms. Marshall. We appreciate having you here, both as a citizen who is interested in adequate means to combat poverty, and as the former Director of VISTA as well.

We have a VISTA volunteer with the Coalition of Texans with Disabilities, Nancy Crowther. Nancy, please proceed.

Ms. CROWTHER. Thank you.

I am here today to tell you about my experience as a VISTA volunteer with the Coalition of Texans with Disabilities, the important role the VISTA Program has played in CTD's development, and the success of the VISTA Program in Texas.

My VISTA service began in May 1984, and has involved working with a variety of individuals with disabilities to assist in developing their independent living skills. Assigned to the Austin Resource Center for Independent Living, I have worked to improve rehab services and develop programs to serve the disabled and provide more independent living opportunities in the areas of housing, employment, and social interaction. I have found my VISTA service to be a valuable and rewarding experience.

My VISTA supervisor, a former VISTA volunteer herself, requested that I tell you the important role the VISTA Program has played in CTD's progress over the past 3 years. This program has given CTD the arms to reach out across the State to our member organizations. Over the past 3½ years, VISTA volunteers placed with member organizations have lent their talent and skills to build membership participation and community services. With their assistance, CTD has grown and expanded our membership participation from less than 10 to 70 member organizations. Each volunteer has goals and objectives to guide them in their community work. With the support of the local organization, the VISTA volunteers work to promote full access and independent living opportunities in the most productive and least restrictive environment and to encourage placement and the productive involvement of individuals with disabilities in all employment settings, both public and private.

Much of the volunteer's energies are spent increasing public awareness of the needs and abilities of disabled persons and expanding the involvement of the volunteer, consumer organizations in responding to the needs of individuals with disabilities and encouraging membership development and increased participation to achieve economic self sufficiency.

The CTD Program has placed volunteers across the State in the metropolitan areas where they have helped recruit new member organizations for CTD. Besides this assistance, the volunteers have devoted their energies to their local projects.

What are some of the assignments of these volunteers? In Dallas, a VISTA volunteer is working at the Dallas Center for Independent Living, providing job skills training and contacting local companies to discuss employment of individuals with disabilities. Publishing a monthly newsletter, coordinating workshops on accessibility and computer technology and surveying the local community are all part of the responsibilities of an El Paso VISTA. In Houston, the local Independent Living Center is able to provide assistance to their clients with locating accessible housing because of the efforts of a VISTA. A VISTA volunteer who is deaf blind provides support and peer counseling to other deaf-blind individuals in San Antonio. In Austin, a VISTA developed an employment program for severely disabled individuals.

Over 50 individuals have served in the CTD VISTA volunteer program. Coming from all walks of life and varied experiences,

these volunteers have expressed a desire to take part in helping at a local level, serving in their own communities. The VISTA volunteers at CTD have been lawyers, social workers, engineers, business people, retired teachers—and the list goes on.

In keeping with CTD's commitment of promoting the abilities of individuals with disabilities, the CTD VISTA Program has recruited and placed in the VISTA Program 35 individuals with disabilities, including deafness, blindness, quadraplegia, to name a few. All the CTD VISTA volunteers have had the ability to work with people and communicate their concern and interest.

By serving as a VISTA volunteer, these individuals have not only given to their community but have gained an experience that will last a lifetime and many have used these skills to obtain future employment. Most volunteers are amazed at how much can be accomplished in actual practice. They really expand their self-image and capabilities. They have left behind many ongoing services and projects for CTD and the local member organizations. Many of the individuals who have served as VISTA volunteers with CTD have gone on to employment with the five Independent Living Centers in Texas, State agencies, private industry, and other nonprofit organizations. With the skills and training they received as a VISTA volunteer, they were able to accept positions as job counselors, public relations coordinators, small business managers, social workers, legal aid attorneys, et cetera.

Over 30 local and State organizations have been served by the CTD VISTA Programs. Job development programs, training programs, workshops, small business endeavors, fundraising activities and community organizations have all been projects of the volunteers. It does not take much analysis to see that the VISTA Program pays for itself many times over in terms of human dignity, benefit to American society, and millions of dollars saved when disabled persons are able to live productively.

CTD is currently in the final year of the VISTA volunteer program. The remainder of this year we are working to achieve support for local projects throughout the State of Texas. We are proud to have had the VISTA volunteer program involving such dedicated individuals working to further the CTD message of cross-disability cooperation and communication.

In the State of Texas, there is strong support for the VISTA Program since Congress authorized and appropriated funds for the continuation of VISTA last year. The program has grown from near phase out to 30 established VISTA projects across the State of Texas and over 150 volunteers. Projects with food banks, youth employment, literacy programs, Teach the Children, Parents Annonymous, halfway house for ex-offenders, and Big Brothers/Big Sisters are a few of the groups benefiting by the VISTA Program.

The investment is not just the year of the VISTA volunteer service but the real rewards are felt by the community. The work of the VISTA volunteers has produced ongoing projects that benefit the entire population. The VISTA projects are so well received in Texas that all projects have gotten the overwhelming support of the county judges who are asked to sign off on each project. The majority of the VISTA projects in Texas receive local support for supervision, transportation, and on-site project costs.

As you can see, those of us in Texas believe the VISTA volunteer program is important to our communities and would encourage your continued support. We are proud of CTD's VISTA Program and the other Texas projects, and we invite you to visit us and let us show you how meaningful and cost effective the VISTA Program can be. You will be proud, too.

Thank you very much for this opportunity.

[Prepared statement of Nancy Crowther follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF NANCY CROWTHER, CTD VISTA VOLUNTEER

I am here today to tell you about my experience as a VISTA Volunteer with the Coalition of Texans with Disabilities (CTD), the important role the VISTA program has played in CTD's development and the success of the VISTA program in Texas.

My VISTA service began in May, 1984 and has involved working with a variety of individuals with disabilities to assist in developing their independent living skills. Assigned to the Austin Independent Living Center I have worked to improve rehab services and develop programs to serve the disabled and provide more independent living opportunities in housing, employment, and social interaction. I have found my VISTA service to be a valuable and rewarding experience.

My VISTA Supervisor, a former VISTA Volunteer herself, requested that I tell you the important tole the VISTA Program has played in CTD's progress over the past three years. This program has given CTD the arms to reach out across the state to our member organizations. Over the past 3½ years, the VISTA Volunteers placed with member organizations have lent their talent and skills to build membership participation and community services. With their assistance CTD has grown and expanded our membership participation from less than 10 to 70 member organizations. Each Volunteer has goals and objectives to guide them in their community work. With the support of the local organization, the VISTA Volunteers work to promote full access and independent living opportunities in the most productive and least restrictive environment and to encourage placement and the productive involvement of individuals with disabilities in all employment settings (both public and private sector). Much of the Volunteer's energies are spent increasing public awareness of the needs and abilities of disabled persons and expanding the involvement of Volunteer, consumer organizations in responding to the needs of individuals with disabilities and encouraging membership development and increased participation to achieve economic self-sufficiency.

The CTD program has placed Volunteers across the state in the metropolitan areas where they have helped recruit new member organizations for CTD. Besides this assistance the Volunteers have devoted their energies to their local projects. What are some of the assignments of these volunteers? In Dallas, a VISTA Volunteer is working at the Dallas Center for Independent Living providing job skills training and contacting local companies to discuss employment of individuals with disabilities; publishing a monthly newsletter, coordinating workshops on accessibility and computer technology and surveying the local community are all part of the responsibilities of an El Paso VISTA; in Houston the local Independent Living Center is able to provide assistance to their clients with locating accessible housing because of the efforts of a VISTA, a VISTA Volunteer who is deaf-blind; provides support and peer counseling to other deaf-blind individuals in San Antonio and in Austin, a VISTA developed employment program for severely disabled individuals.

Over 50 individuals have served in the CTD VISTA Volunteer program. Coming from all walks of life and varied experiences, these volunteers have expressed a desire to take part in helping at a local level, serving in thier own communities. The VISTA Volunteers at CTD have been lawyers, social workers, engineers, business people, retired teachers, the list goes on and on.

In keeping with CTD's commitment of promoting the abilities of individuals with disabilities, the CTD VISTA program has recruited and placed in the VISTA program, 35 individuals with disabilities including deafness, blindness, quadraplegia, to name a few. All the CTD VISTA Volunteers have had the ability to work with people and communicate their concern and interest.

By serving as a VISTA Volunteer, these individuals have not only given to their community but have gained an experience that will last a lifetime and many have used these skills to obtain future employment. Most Volunteers are amazed at how much can be accomplished in actual practice. They really expand their self-image and capabilities. They have left behind many on-going services and projects for CTD

and the local member organizations. Many of the individuals who have served as VISTA Volunteers with CTD, have gone on to employment with the 5 Independent Living Centers in Texas, state agencies, private industry, and other non-profit organizations. With the skills and training they received as a VISTA Volunteer they were able to accept positions as job counselors, public relations coordinators, small business managers, social workers, legal aid attorneys, etc.

Over 30 local and state organizations have been served by the CTD VISTA Volunteer programs. Job development programs, training programs, workshops, small business endeavors, fundraising activities and community organizations have all been projects of the Volunteers. It does not take much analysis to see that the VISTA program pays for itself many times over—in terms of human dignity, in terms of benefit to American society and in terms of millions of dollars saved when disabled persons are enable to live productively.

CTD is currently in the final year of the VISTA Volunteer Program. The remainder of this year we are working to achieve support for local projects throughout the state of Texas. We are proud to have had the VISTA Volunteer program involving such dedicated individuals working to further the CTD message of cross-disability cooperation and communication.

In the state of Texas, there is strong support for the VISTA program since Congress authorized and appropriated funds for the continuation of VISTA last year. The program has grown from near phase out to 30 established VISTA projects across the state of Texas and over 150 Volunteers. Projects with Food Banks, Youth Employment, Literacy Programs-Teach the Children, Parents Anonymous, Halfway House for Ex-Offenders and Big Brothers/Big Sisters are a few of the groups benefiting by the VISTA program.

The investment is not just the year of the VISTA Volunteer service but the real rewards are felt by the community. The work of the VISTA Volunteers have produced ongoing projects that benefit the entire population. The VISTA projects are so well received in Texas that all projects have gotten the overwhelming support of the County Judges who are asked to sign off on each project. The majority of the VISTA projects in Texas receive local support for supervision, transportation and on-site project costs.

As you can see those of us in Texas believe the VISTA Program is important to our communities and would encourage your continued support. We are proud of CTD's VISTA's program and the other Texas projects, and we invite you to visit us and let us show you how meaningful and cost effective the VISTA program can be. You'll be proud too.

Besides providing a full time service opportunity for individuals with disabilities through the CTD project, VISTA programs have given individuals the opportunity to serve with community programs in Texas over the past 20 years.

The projects have covered a myriad of services and local community support for the low income communities in Texas. Over the years Volunteers have come from all across Texas and other parts of the country to assist with these projects. With VISTA's current emphasis on local recruiting we do receive good assistance but the outside, specialized talents that used to be available through national recruitment are missed. CTD was fortunate to have a very talented VISTA Volunteer serving in another state request placement in Texas. His skills relating to technology brought CTD assistance we could not have received with the limited local recruitment. We would support a move by the VISTA program to include national recruitment in the future to better assist the VISTA projects.

CTD/VISTA VOLUNTEER STATIONS 1981–1985

Amarillo Disabled Individuals in Action; Amarillo.
Arlington Handicapped Association; Arlington.
Association of Individuals with Disabilities; Dallas.
Austin Resource Center for Independent Living; Austin.
Coalition for Barrier Free Living; Houston.
CTD/Central Office—Regional Outreach; Statewide.
Dallas Center for Independent Living; Dallas.
Deaf/Blind Multihandicapped Assoc. of Texas; Statewide.
Deaf/Blind Project, ESC Region 20; San Antonio.
El Paso Center of the Deaf; El Paso.
El Paso Lighthouse for the Blind; El Paso.
El Paso Opportunity Center for the Handicapped; El Paso.
Houston Center for Independent Living; Houston.
Job Lead; San Antonio.

Long Range Planning Group for Texans with Disabilities; Austin.
Lubbock County Services for the Deaf; Lubbock.
Open Door Pre-school; Austin.
Panhandle Council for the Deaf; Amarillo.
San Antonio Citizens Concerned about Handicapism; San Antonio.
San Antonio Independent Living Services; San Antonio.
San Antonio Insight, Inc.; San Antonio.
Southwest Wheelchair Athletic Association; Statewide.
Spina Bifida Association of Texas; Statewide.
Texas Association of Children and Adults with Learning Disabilities; Statewide.
Texas Association of the Deaf; Statewide.
Texas Paralyzed Veterans Assoc.; Statewide.
West Texas Association of the Handicapped; El Paso.

Mr. WILLIAMS. Thank you, Ms. Crowther.

We have a former VISTA volunteer with the Inter-Tribal Council from Reno, Nevada, Shayne Del Cohen. Shayne, please proceed.

Ms. COHEN. Thank you. Good morning. My name is Shayne Del Cohen and I am from Fallon, NV.

I was 19 when I joined VISTA as a national recruit. Very much a child of the sixties, I was typical of the class of 1964. We had been born at the close of World War II, as the hope and promise that the world would never again experience such a holocaust. As the school children of the fifties, our three R's were religious, racial, and regional tolerance. As eighth graders just entering pubescence, we watched the first school televised Presidential inauguration broadcast, during which we were asked what could we do for our country. We believed all of it and thought we could do no wrong.

By the time we graduated from high school, however, war was again beginning to dominate our lives, and the civil strife occurring in all corners of the Nation meant the time-honored and often espoused American ideals and principles we had been taught were not yet a reality throughout. Our innocence and our naivete were exposed.

We all go through periods, as the Senator earlier said, where we search for meaning and direction, and one is usually midway through college. For me, 4 more years of test tubes and lab reports in medical school where I was headed seemed to lose its meaning.

So I went to the Fallon Paiute-Shoshone Indian Reservation in the days when there were no regional offices, when VISTA was just a D.C. telephone number and a philosophy. With the exception of time off to pursue higher education degrees overseas, and as a loaned-out consultant, I have never left. I still live in a three-room, 1934 Eleanor Roosevelt house. My outhouse features one of the best vantage points for a western desert sunset. But it is also a reminder that there are vestiges of other times alive and well in the United States today.

I have had the ultimate privilege of becoming part of a local Indian family, so I have four lovely sisters, age now 15 to 25, which makes my professional and personal life intertwined forever. Ten years after me, this family adopted another VISTA of Japanese-American decent and as our brother he has spent the last decade working for the tribe, the Governor of Nevada's Futures Commission, and now is an assistant hospital administrator.

Past my volunteer year I have been involved in VISTA as a volunteer leader in Washington State and southeastern Arizona, as a trainer on the east coast, and as a project sponsor supervisor for

several organizations, thus experiencing the entire scope of VISTA projects over two decades: migrant, inner city, Job Corps, rural development, mental health, economic development, independent living—you name it.

The energy and creativity and breadth of ideas of communities working to improve their standard of living and actualize their vision of the future was, and I think still is, boundless. I met and worked with all kinds of people of all ages and backgrounds. In particular I remember a couple from Eureka Springs, Arkansas. Married since they were 16, this dentist and his wife, who was a dental assistant, still felt at age 71 there might be some teeth somewhere that needed fixing. What they had in common with all the other volunteers was their belief that they had something to share with their fellow man.

Volunteers also believe that a year of their lives is not too much to contribute to their country as a part of our heritage of Nation-building. For some, to be sure, the time as an alternative to military service was a conscious choice. But given the number of older volunteers and the continued enlistment in VISTA past 1972, there is graphic evidence that the social conscience of this country is greater than a temporary political environment and that "Yuppies" have not yet attained a moral majority.

Many of the national pool volunteers stayed on their project sites or are involved in the type of work with which they were involved in as volunteers. In Nevada, over 50 percent of the Inter-Tribal Council volunteers stayed past their project year and many are still State residents. They developed tribal education committees to work with school districts. They reduced the school dropout rate from over 50 percent to 12 percent. They increased postsecondary enrollment by 300 percent. Many preschool, teacher aid, library aid, curriculum materials and newspapers in Nevada can trace their roots to VISTA connections. Those working in youth counseling and recreation projects share with parents of children a certain glow in watching a new generation achieve academically, professionally and personally.

One such volunteer went on to law school and has been a tribal court judge since 1975, but he is still known as Vista Joe. The inter-tribal volunteers started Nevada Indian Legal Services. The original volunteer from that project is now the justice of the peace in Reno, and one of the first attorneys brought in is now the mayor of Reno.

You will find ex-volunteers involved in every aspect of Nevada civic life. The fruit of their efforts continues to blossom. The last volunteers I supervised, one of whom is this lady sitting behind me, lent their health and scientific backgrounds to enable the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony to contract for the beginnings of a tribal health center that now has over 2,400 active patients who no longer have to travel 200 miles round trip to obtain basic health care.

Like Ms. Marshall, I can talk forever, but I'm going to brief my notes.

VISTA, like any program, is not a panacea. It is a minute mechanism, but a value mechanism, through which we the people, in order to form a more perfect union, and to provide for the common

welfare, can actualize the America dream—whatever version. In truth, only a few people could vote to ratify our Constitution and these goals. Our national history has been to expand the opportunity to nonproperty holding males, to all of the female persuasion, and to people of color to participate in actualizing what in 1789 was a truly revolutionary idea on a globe, bound in a futile economic and political hierarchy.

For me personally to have been an active part of a process, the historical evolution in which tribal governments stemmed the tide of devastation, began to believe in themselves again, and to find a way to meet the challenge and responsibilities of home rule in a modern society, is a validation of the hopes and dreams of my immigrant grandparents, the teaching of my parents, and the aspiration of a generation to be the best and the brightest.

Over the years VISTA has changed, as have the needs of communities. If someone had told me 18 years ago, when our attempts were to bring electricity, indoor plumbing and basic one-line telephone service to reservations, that today I would be worried about training a 79-year old Indian lady in computer operation, I would have not been able to comprehend the potential of those early efforts. Even then, I understood the value of transference of skills and knowledge. It is the basis of a vital and a fluid society and this never, never changes.

A recent letter to our congressional delegation from the Nevada Gubernatorial Commission summarizes the long-term impact and the value of this elusive energy of which I speak. We have watched the tribe undertake, with commendable spirit and willingness, difficult enterprises requiring substantial human and other forms of tribal investment. The Reno-Sparks tribe has brought considerable benefit to its members in areas such as housing, municipal services, police protection, and small business operations. These achievements are remarkable. As the tribe's plans are far-sighted and should be a beacon to those Indians who seek progress to follow the Reno-Sparks tribe's lead in relying upon itself and its members' abilities to raise the living standard of tribal residents and to contribute to the general well-being and prosperity of the surrounding community also.

Thank you, gentlemen.

[Prepared statement of Shayne Del Cohen follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SHAYNE DEL COHEN, FORMER VISTA VOLUNTEER, INTER-TRIBAL COUNCIL, RENO, NV

Good morning. My name is Shayne Del Cohen and I am from Fallon, Nevada.

I was nineteen when I joined VISTA as a national recruit. Very much a child of the 60's I was typical of the Class of '64. We had been born at the close of World War II as the hope and promise that the world would never again experience such a holocaust. As the school children of the 50's our 3R's were religious, racial and regional tolerance. As eighth graders just entering pubescence and awareness that the world was a little bigger than our hometowns we watched the first t.v. broadcasted presidential inauguration during which we were asked what we could do for our country. We believed all of it and thought we could do no wrong.

By the time we graduated from high school, war was again beginning to dominate our lives and the civil strife occurring in all corners of the nation meant the time honored and oft espoused American ideals and principles we had been taught were not yet a reality.

Suddenly our innocence and naivete was exposed. The public education we had received was in danger of being exposed as a hypocrisy and fraud. We all go through

periods where we search for meaning and direction. One such is usually midway through college, but for me the four years of test tubes and lab reports of medical school where I was headed seemed to lose its meaning. Yet the tremendous education and charmed life I'd had to date needed reinvestment in our society and a form of personal statement. Sit-ins did not require much personal commitment. Nor was I convinced that everything about the US was 100% correct for export, nor that things here were so perfect that I could go out and tell the world how to run itself. And, thank you gentlemen, I was precluded at that time from being drafted to the equal opportunity to bear arms.

So I was sent to the Fallon Paiute-Shoshone Indian Reservation in the days when there were no regional offices; when VISTA was only a DC phone number and a philosophy.

With the exception of time off to pursue higher degrees overseas and as a "loaned-out" consultant, I have never left. I still live in a three room, 1934 Eleanor Roosevelt house. My outhouse features one of the best vantage points for a western desert sunset, but is also a reminder that there are vestiges of other times alive and well in the US today. I have had the ultimate privilege of becoming part of a local family and so have four lovely sisters aged 15–25 which makes my professional and personal life intertwined forever. Ten years after me, this family adopted another VISTA of Japanese-American descent and as our brother he has spent the last decade working for the tribe, the Governor of Nevada's Futures Commission and now as an assistant hospital administrator.

Past my volunteer year, I have been involved with VISTA as a volunteer leader in Washington State and SE Arizona, as a trainer on the East Coat, and as a project sponsor/supervisor for several organizations, thus experiencing the entire scope of VISTA projects over two decades: Migrant, inner city, Job corps, rural development, menatl health, recidivism, economic development—you name it—the energy, creativity and breadth of ideas communities working to improve their standard of living and actualize their vision of the future was boundless.

I met and worked with all kinds of people of all ages and backgrounds. In particular I remember a couple from Eureka Springs, Ark. Married since they were 16, this dentist and his wife (dental assistant) still felt at age 71 there might be some teeth somewhere that needed fixing. What they had in common with all the other Volunteers was the belief they had something to share with their fellow man.

Volunteers also believed that a year of their lives was not too much to contribute to their country as a part of our heritage of nation building. For some, to be sure, the time as alternative to military service was a conscious choice, but given the numbers of older volunteers and continued enlistments past 1972, there is graphic evidence that the social conscience of this country is greater than a temporary political environment and that Yuppies have not yet attained a moral majority.

Many NRV volunteers stayed on their project sites or involved in the type of work in which they were involved as volunteers. In Nevada, over 50% of the Inter-Tribal Council volunteers stayed past their project year and many are state residents still. They developed tribal education committees to work with school districts. They reduced the school drop out rate from over 50% to 12%; they increased post secondary enrollment by 300%. Many preschool, teacher & library aide programs, such as Duckwater Shoshone Elementary School, curriculum materials and newspapers can trace their roots to a VISTA connection. Those that worked in youth counseling and recreation projects share with parents a certain glow in watching a new generation achieve academically, professionally and personally. One such volunteer went on to law school and has been a tribal court judge since 1975, but is still known as VISTA Joe.

The ITC volunteers started Nevada Indian Legal Services. The original volunteer from that project is now the Justice of the Peace for Reno. On of the first attorneys brought in is now the Mayor of Reno. You will find ex-volunteers involved in every aspect of Nevada civic life.

The fruit of their efforts continues to blossom. The last volunteers I supervised lent their scientific backgrounds to enable the Reno Sparks Indian Colony to contract for the beginnings of a tribal health center that now has over 2400 active patients who no longer have to travel 200 miles round trip to obtain health care.

The impact of VISTA on other NRV Volunteers continues to benefit all of us. Among early volunteers with whom I have continued to be friends are a couple who provide me a home in D.C. when I am here on limited tribal funds. They met and married as Nevada volunteers. He went on to a notable career as a professor here at Howard via Temple and Tufts Universities and as a researcher in chemical dependency at the National Institute of Health. She, while raising three beautiful children, graduated with an A average in nursing and now works in a D.C. hospital. Their

lives continue to be "in service to America," and their children are the reality of that to which we aspired. I am comfortable that when they come of age, that their value system, information age skills and know-how will carry us one step forward.

You have heard testimony that VISTA is cost effective and other such details of bureaucratic interest. From my perspective it is also one of the better networks of identifying and redistributing some of the positive know-how and/or energy in this country. Planners debate harnessing, conservation and expenditure of natural resources; you in your legislative role are all concerned with the allocation of fiscal resources. All too often the human resource gets ignored and that results directly in social unrest.

VISTA, like any progam is not a panacea. It is a minute mechanism, but a valuable mechanism through which "we the people in order to form a more perfect union and provide for the common welfare" can actualize the American dream—whatever version. In truth, only a few people could vote to ratify our Constitution and these goals. Our national history has been to expand the opportunity to non-property holding males, to all of the female persuasion and to people of color to participate in actualizing what in 1789 was truly a revolutionary idea on a globe bound in a feudal economic and political hierarchy.

For me personally to have been an active part of a process, a historical evolution in which Tribal governments stemmed the tide of devastation, began to believe in themselves again, and find a way to meet the challenge and responsibilities of home rule in a modern society is a validation of all the hopes and dreams of my immigrant grandparents, the teachings of my parents and the aspiration of a generation to be "the best and the brightest." Over the years VISTA has changed as have the needs of communities. If someone had told me 18 years ago when our attempts were to bring electricity, indoor plumbing and basic (one-line) telephone service to reservations that one day I'd be training a 79 year old Indian lady in computer operation I would not have been able to comprehend the potential of those early efforts. But even then I understood the value of transference of skills and knowledge. It is the basis of a vital and fluid society and this need never changes.

A recent letter to our Congressional delegation from a Nevada gubernatorial commission summarizes the long-term impact and value of this elusive energy which I speak:

"We have watched the Tribe undertake, with commendable spirit and willingness, difficult enterprises requiring substantial human and other forms of tribal investment. The Reno/Sparks tribe has brought considerable benefit to its members in areas such as housing, municipal services, police protection and small business operations. These achievements are remarkable . . . the Tribe's plans are far sighted and should be a beacon to those Indians who seek progress to follow the Reno-Sparks Tribe's lead in relying upon itself and its members' abilities to raise the living standards of tribal residents and to contribute to the general well-being and prosperity of the surrounding community . . ."

Mr. WILLIAMS. Thank you, Shayne.

Mr. Bartlett.

Mr. BARTLETT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I very much appreciate both the testimony of the witnesses today and, frankly, their service in the things that they do. I am familiar with and have worked with in the Dallas area the food bank network, which is quite successful. In fact, it is oftentimes staffed, if you will, by VISTA volunteers.

In particular, I am quite impressed with and have been familiar with for the last year or so the work done at the independent living centers by VISTA volunteers and by others in terms of bringing about independent living, whether it's a combination of transportation, housing, and primarily I think empoloyment to disabled persons.

My question would be of my constituent, Nancy Crowther—not really my constituent, but in Texas the legislature and Federal judges change the district lines rather frequently, so perhaps she has been or will be or she has kinfolk that are.

My question is, as you look at the people you work with at the independent living center who are disabled, in considering the indi-

vidual cases that you work with, and considering the national statistic that a 16 percent employment rate among disabled persons of working age, or an 84 percent unemployment rate, where would—and it's an open-ended question—where do you see the primary barriers? What are the most significant barriers to employment? Is it in the Social Security laws, is it in transportaton, is it in public understanding, is it in the private sector, is it the lack of technology? If you could make changes in one area of the Government in terms of removing disincentives to employment for disabled persons, where would you make those changes? If you were in our shoes, where would you start?

Ms. CROWTHER. It's hard to say because of the "catch 22" type of situation every disabled person is placed into. When you become dependent upon the Government for benefits and then you try to seek employment, the chances of your employment opportunities and the income which you're going to need to be able to live independently won't match up. That happens a lot of times to where it is a disincentive to become employed. It's because you can't make it out there in the real world unless you have a fairly good income and the support services that need to go with that income.

Mr. BARTLETT. So it is the "catch 22" of various Federal laws that—I suppose you're not speaking of cash benefits, for example, because if a person becomes employed, then the cash benefits of the transfer payments are no longer as significant. But it's the other medical benefits, for example, medical coverage and those kinds of things, and perhaps the uncertainty of being able to have those medical benefits or other things reinstated should you lose your job.

This committee also has jurisdiction over that, which is why I explore that with you, and this subcommittee, and the chairman in particular, has spent a great deal of time and effort in the last year, and will be in the next 2 years, trying to identify some of those barriers and removing them to provide for full employment.

I would ask the other witnesses, as you look at the poverty cycle—and you have seen the statistics, the percentage of Americans in poverty has not decreased, even with the changes that we have made and the various transfer payment systems. I suppose my question to you is, where would you identify the barriers to persons moving out of poverty? Where would you, in terms of the mobility out of poverty, where would you identify the most significant barriers to upward mobility, to use a "middle class" term—I don't mean to oversimplify it—but as you work with people, what is it about the Federal law that keeps you from being able to move people out of poverty or help them? What's your pet frustration, I suppose is my question.

Ms. D'AMATO. I do agree with Nancy, that we often see also in Massachuetts where it is a catch 22, where a person has been employed and had specific benefits, et cetera, and it also works in the reverse, when they go off the employment rolls, trying to get back on. If someone is on government subsidy, there are enormous benefits to them, and in order to make up financially the type of packages that they need to get off of government subsistance, it does require a good deal of financial assistance.

If somebody is an individual with a couple of children who is participating in various programs, and then once going off government assistance has to then pay for day care, or then make other provisions for children, you're looking at someone needing to make $20,000 a year. Someone coming off of welfare is not going to go into a $20,000 a year position, at least not in Massachusetts, where the income reimbursement is much less in the rural part of Massachusetts than at other places.

That would be my one response. There are several, but we won't take the time.

Mr. BARTLETT. Do VISTA volunteers participate in those efforts to help people with opportunities to move off of the dependence on the Federal Government and into full employment, independent living?

Ms. CROWTHER. Yes.

Mr. BARTLETT. I know that we do with the independent living center, but in the food bank and other kinds of areas——

Ms. CROWTHER. Right.

Ms. COHEN. Again, particularly in Indian country, a lot of the volunteers have been involved in education programs. I just gave you the statistics that I followed in Nevada. You have a whole new generation that is coming along and is becoming professional and taking leadership and professional jobs. So their economic status is far beyond what their parents or grandparents ever anticipated. I think there are real hard results there.

Mr. BARTLETT. Thank you.

Ms. Marshall, did you want to add anything?

Ms. MARSHALL. We all know the complexity of the poverty problem. There is not one reason why people are poor. We also know there is the group that goes in and out of poverty, depending on other factors—unemployment, inflation, other economic factors in the country.

Having served at OEO for 3 or 4 years in a variety of capacities, at a time when we were trying to evaluate both the problem and some of the approaches we had, I know how very complex it is. So I cannot answer your question directly because it is much too complex. But I would like to use it as another pitch for VISTA, and that is, one of the big advantages of the program is that people are working at the local level. First of all, they see many of these problems before they come to national attention. Secondly, they are working with experimental demonstration, or as Senator Rockefeller said, a lot of things that don't work. I mean, they're trying at the local level new approaches at all times and many of them don't work.

I suppose, because of my own political philosophy, I just think that's the way these kinds of problems eventually are going to be solved, as opposed to having a Federal or even a State or sometimes even a city program that is beset with regulations and is set in concrete. Having a program at the local level that can respond when necessary and to the individual needs of the people I think is the way we will, if ever, eventually solve some of these very complex problems.

Ms. COHEN. Could I add something to that? Both you gentlemen have touched on that in a different way, but you asked what pro-

grams would work. A lot of the original OEO legislation was entirely demonstrative—you know, we'll give you some finance or some people or some legal flexibility to try something for a period of time, to see if it works, realizing that every community is different and it has a different personality so that different things will work.

What I think has happened sometimes is that those programs have become either sacred cows or institutionalized to the point where that flexibility is no longer there.

Mr. BARTLETT. You wouldn't want to give us some examples by name, library services, perhaps or——[Laughter.]

Ms. COHEN. Do you want to take the Federal Domestic Assistance Catalog?

Again, because I came in at a really early time and there was a basic philosophy, it was to try something, see if it works; if it works, institute it in a way that's not duplicative and that pays for itself. I think that's the philosophy of a lot of the programs that I have worked with. We gave them like a 3-year thing.

Addressing something where you talked about the mix of national pool and local volunteers, we always took the philosophy of bringing in a national volunteer that had the skills or the background that was not present in the local community, have them start their project. If the people take to it, if it's what seems to be going in the direction they want, then match up a local recruit and institute it, phase out the NRV, and ultimately phase out the community volunteer into a structure that is controlled by that community.

Mr. BARTLETT. Thank you. I thank the panel.

Mr. Chairman, I have another session at 11:30, but I do appreciate your having this hearing.

Mr. WILLIAMS. Thank you.

Mr. Hayes.

Mr. HAYES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do hope Miss Cohen will supply us with a written statement. I found her testimony quite interesting.

Ms. COHEN. We will.

Mr. HAYES. I would like to raise a question of Miss Cohen. What do you believe should be done to protect the program in the event there is any undermining of the program's legislative intent or, in particular, its exclusive antipoverty focus?

Ms. COHEN. You're going to have to clarify "antipoverty focus" to me.

Mr. HAYES. Well, a part of it is directed toward the poor and the disadvantaged, isn't that right?

Ms. COHEN. Yes. You say it precluded—I'm sorry.

Mr. HAYES. It is directed towards. It is in danger of going out of existence, as I see it. What do you think we should do in order to protect it?

Ms. COHEN. I think everybody here has stated that, first of all, people have to know about it, and people that are committed to it——

Mr. HAYES. Do you have any specific suggestions other than notifying people about it?

Ms. COHEN. Well, again, I do feel—and this is coming from 20 years ago—that a national call to people that does not exclude any age group or any background would do that.

Mr. HAYES. Well, let me ask Miss Marshall this question then, as a former Director. I understand today that ACTION no longer advertises or promotes the VISTA program nationally, or for that matter, at the State, local, or regional level.

Do you believe that persons would respond positively to VISTA recruitment and public awareness efforts today as they did when you served as the Director?

Ms. MARSHALL. Absolutely, Mr. Congressman. I think they would respond in several ways. The most obvious is in terms of actual recruitment. As I said in my statement, when people are not aware—and I think as some of the other people at this table have said—when people are not aware that VISTA still exists, obviously they are not moved to volunteer. I know that people around the country want to serve their country as much now as they did in the sixties and seventies, when we had national recruitment.

But I would also like to add another point that is important to make and that I think is an important reason to have national recruitment. I have over the years, both when I was Director of VISTA and since then, because I have maintained my interest in the program, talked to people in all walks of life about the VISTA program. I have heard so many people comment on the VISTA advertisements and the VISTA commercials over the years. First of all, they were clever, people enjoyed them, but what I have heard and what has moved me so is people, young and old, have said to me "It meant a lot to me to know that those VISTA volunteers were out there doing the things that we saw them doing in the VISTA commercials." They have often said, "I would like to be a VISTA volunteer and I hope that next year, or when I retire, at some point in my life I will be able to be a VISTA volunteer. But it's likely I probably never will be. Nevertheless, it makes me feel good, it makes me proud to know that my tax money is going to a program of that sort."

This is particularly true when OEO was in existence and there was a lot of controversy about many of the other OEO programs. People would say to me, "I know so much of my money is going down the drain. This is a serious problem and we do want to help the poor, but we have so many programs that aren't working, I would like to know that that program with those young people and now older people are doing what they are doing."

In other words, I think it touched a cord in part in many people's hearts. Many people said to me, "I can't be a VISTA volunteer but I'm going to volunteer in my community." I mean, they really were moved to do so because of the VISTA experience.

Now, this all sounds very dramatic and I sound like I'm on a soapbox. I realize that. But VISTA, as I said in my statement, offers hope. VISTA has been a crusade. It is not just another poverty program. It affects people in a different way than many of the other Federal programs. I think it's important to point that out, even though it sounds a little sugary when I do so.

Mr. HAYES. I just want to comment——

Ms. MARSHALL. That's a long answer to your simple question.

Mr. HAYES. Even though the number of millionaires in this country has increased—I think I read the other day that we're about to reach that one-millionth millionaire—the number of people who are living below the poverty line is also increasing rapidly. I would like to know from you, Miss D'Amato, of the VISTA's assigned to your food bank, how many themselves are low income people?

Ms. D'AMATO. Out of the six we have now, they all qualify. Ironically, for two of them, to engage as VISTA volunteers was an increase in their income level from what they participated in the year before, which was the first time I had seen that happen in a long time. So I was almost very apologetic as to what they were going to be doing and what kinds of support services, and they said "this is much more than I was making." Those are both individuals right out of college.

Mr. HAYES. No further questions, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. WILLIAMS. Ms. Marshall, when you were the Director of VISTA, was there a most successful element within the effort? Was there one thing that worked better than any of the others?

Ms. MARSHALL. You mean in terms of appropriate type of program that worked better than others?

Mr. WILLIAMS. Yes.

Ms. MARSHALL. I would say no. I think that would depend on the person looking. I have examples of successes, but I don't think there was one particular program.

Mr. WILLIAMS. If there were a number of more successful efforts, more successful elements within VISTA—and apparently, from what you're saying, there were a number of successful efforts—is there any way to define why they were more successful than the others?

Ms. MARSHALL. Congressman, this is my view because many people will answer this in different ways. But I think, in terms of my experience at OEO of all poverty programs, that more often than not, if you're looking for the single reason a program worked, you look to the individual or individuals involved.

As you recall, in the seventies one of the roles we saw for ourselves at OEO was to look around the country and find programs that were working and then attempt to replicate them in other areas. We met with, I believe, limited success in that because what we often found was that the successful programs were successful because of the individuals who conceived them and/or who were running them. Therefore, you could not always take that model and replicate it somewhere else unless you had that person somewhere else.

Mr. WILLIAMS. You mentioned earlier, as others have many times in the past quarter century, that there were some poverty programs that didn't work very well. You're telling me that those VISTA efforts that didn't work very well were more the responsibility of the people applying them in the field than they were the act itself or the intention of the Government or the people here who were administering the programs. Is that true of the antipoverty programs, the other ones that you mentioned that didn't work very well? Was it the fault of the Government or the fault of those volunteers and those citizens applying that effort?

Ms. MARSHALL. Well, first of all, I don't know that it helps very much to be placing fault; I would rather look at the more positive aspects. But I suppose I'm a typical Government——

Mr. WILLIAMS. But until one determines why a program didn't work, you can't create one that does work. You see, I have a basic disagreement with your viewpoint—and, by the way, it is the majority viewpoint in this country. That is, you shouldn't try to find fault. Well, it seems to me that when we're after an effort as significant and serious as lifting Americans out of poverty, so that everybody can share in the guarantees of the Constitution, we do need to find fault so that we don't repeat it. We're not going to put anybody in jail because they were at fault. It's just that we need to know whether the act was written wrong or——

Ms. MARSHALL. All right. Perhaps we're hung up on semantics, because I agree with what you said. Certainly, when I was at OEO, we spent a lot of time and energy in evaluating programs, which is, I suppose, a nice way of saying finding fault. We were trying to find which ones worked and which ones didn't.

Mr. WILLIAMS. Sure.

Ms. MARSHALL. I believe that that's important.

I think when you look back at many of the original poverty programs—and again, I'm stumbling, because it is such a complex issue and there are so many programs that come to mind—but certainly those that "failed" were also a success because if we learned that something failed, we presumably no longer spent money trying to replicate it. That is not often seen by the public as a success.

I might add that my first job at OEO, I was brought down there from the Hill to be Director of Congressional Relations. So if you want anyone to tell you about the problems with the program I can tell you because I faced that every day for a year-and-a-half. Many people on the Hill were very displeased with these things.

Also, you look at programs like Head Start as a good example, our studies in the seventies showed that Head Start was a "failure"—again I'm putting this all in quotes—in terms of its initial mission of attempting to mainstream kids into school. But we found it was an enormous success in terms of something that hadn't even been thought of, and that was the health needs of these young kids. When Sargent Shriver first started to talk about Head Start, no one ever thought about talking about the health needs of preschool children because I don't think people in the country at that time knew what a sorry state it was. So who is to say that in those early years Head Start were a success or a failure? It did wonderful things but it generally did not succeed in terms of what it was designed for. So as I said, is that a success or a failure? That depends on how one wants to look at the program.

But generally speaking, again my political philosophy, being a Republican, I believe that people ought to have the right to make their own decisions. I have supported the VISTA Program and I have been very actively involved over the years in the Minority Economic Development Program and I continue to be. The concept, there again, the OEO's concept, was to place in that case a great deal of money in the hands of local community organizations and let them determine.

Well, obviously mistakes are made, and I think one of the problems that Congress has in devising programs of this sort has been to the extent that you provide funds for community groups to make their own decisions, local initiatives, all those good-sounding community determinations and all those things I really believe in, that mistakes will be made and there are embarrassments. Politically, it's a very difficult situation.

Mr. WILLIAMS. You have all been very helpful in this hearing to recall the past 20 years and celebrate them. I think it has been very interesting.

You know, we Americans are an impatient lot. We like drama, we like happy endings, and we don't want to wait a long time between the beginning and the happy ending. We want things done very quickly, efficiently and dramatically. And yet, when VISTA and many of the war-on-poverty efforts began, they were—at least the notion for them was started by a new young President, who in listing some of his dreams for America went on to tell us at the very beginning of his term that these things would not be accomplished in 100 days or 1,000 days, or perhaps, he said, in our lifetime on this planet. So he said, "Let us begin."

That was, I guess, Jack Kennedy's way of coming to reality with the fact that efforts to improve the economic situation of millions of Americans was going to take many, many decades and perhaps be an unending struggle in this country. I know of no struggle, lest it be civil rights, that is more in keeping with America's direction. So we should take no umbrage at the fact that the effort would remain unending throughout our time. And yet we seem to.

Maybe I'm misrepresenting what I think I'm hearing here today, but it seems to me there is a certain amount of pathos in the testimony that has been presented, including that by Senator Rockefeller. I don't know if it's a weariness or a quiet resolve that we hear from you and others who have been involved in this grand effort. Tell me, which is it? Are we weary in this country of trying to bring the Constitution's promises to all Americans, and if we're weary, are we about to jettison the effort? Or is this small crowd here today and this quiet ceremony just an example of the quiet resolve that people have to dig in these trenches and continue this battle?

What do you think, Shayne?

Ms. COHEN. I think it's a quiet resolve. I am still in contact with a lot of people, and I have probably worked with from 200 to 500 volunteers over the years, and it is amazing to me what commitments people do make and actualize in their life.

I think from my age group we have all gone through our 35 year old depression, much of which was precipitated by Newsweek's yuppie article, and I think it's a quiet resolve. I think, as Carol said, there's a lot of things that make up any situation. We have historical evolutions and tie-in situations which sometimes seem to repeat themselves. People, as societies, have to go through different processes. But I do think it's a quiet resolve and I don't think you find anybody wanting—while they talk about the good old days, a lot of people that were on the other side of the fence in the good old days don't want to go back. So we're going forward.

Mr. WILLIAMS. Catherine, knowing what you know now of these past 20 years, and of your important efforts at the Massachusetts food bank, do you think it would be possible to bring together a combination of Federal, State, and local efforts which could once and for all, and for all time, end hunger in Massachusetts, only Massachuesetts? If we applied all of our resources in Massachusetts, do you think we could end it by the end of this century, 15 years, for all time?

Ms. D'AMATO. No, I don't. The politics of hunger is as vibrant as the politics of any other issue in this country, and to end it would be euphoria. It's not going to happen. I think constituencies will fight on both sides for a variety of reasons. Food banking has always seen itself as not the end to hunger but a management tool of hunger. We simply act as a resource by which waste can be brought through to ensure that that's not put in landfill or dumped but that it is utilized, and that people who do not have access gain access. Some of those people move on to other things.

So I would like to share in that thought, that I think it would be wonderful. And yet, what we have seen, in my being in food banking the last 10 years, is not a decrease but an increase. I don't see that increase ending for a good bit of time.

I think the impact of VISTA volunteers on hunger in this country, and homelessness—because to me they go hand in hand; you rarely find a homeless person that isn't hungry, or a hungry person that isn't homeless—has made a very strong and significant difference. I hope that it will continue to do so, to lessen the numbers and to provide services that give people a sense of dignity. If you're hungry and you're homeless, it's very hard to ask for help and to come in, especially in rural America. We don't see people asking the same way they ask in urban areas. There are hidden pockets of poverty and you can't always pin down the statistics. It is those VISTA volunteers that are out there doing the work, along with other staff, that are making a difference.

Mr. WILLIAMS. Everyone I have talked to that has worked with the antipoverty attempts have answered similar questions in the same way in which you are. Those folks who work most closely with the poor, or the results of poverty, have the clearest view of the length of this struggle. They know best where it's been and they know how long it will take to really begin to make significant and serious changes in the lives of these people and their children and children yet born.

But somehow the impatience came from an American public that didn't work with the problem. In fact, until the early 1960's, they did not know there were poor people in their midst because those people were hidden. So there was some talk by some politicians in the early sixties that we would actually end poverty. I think, even then, we could call them experts, although there wasn't much expertise to be gained by fighting poverty because there weren't many people fighting it outside of the Salvation Army. But the experts knew that we weren't going to end it. As Jack Kennedy told us, perhaps not in our lifetime on this planet would it be over.

Nancy, you experience and work with people who understand more clearly than anyone else the difficulties for those who have disabilities of some nature or other. In your experiences, how diffi-

cult do you think it will be to accomplish the important task of ending people's exaggerated and misunderstood notions about their fellow citizens who have disabilities?

Ms. CROWTHER. I can tell you from experience right now that the move is on for more awareness in the disabilities area, and that the views and the misconceptions are changing very slowly and very surely. I think what the 504 act has helped this very greatly. It's going to take a while, but it is happening.

Mr. WILLIAMS. That, too, is a long struggle, isn't it?

Ms. CROWTHER. Yes.

Mr. WILLIAMS. The misconceptions about people who live in poverty is also something that it seems to me it's going to take an awful long time for all of us to resolve.

I mentioned in my opening statement that old poverty was visiting young Americans. There is another group of Americans that old poverty is reaching and that's women, particularly older women. Older women in this country live in poverty.

It seems to me that the best role that this President could take is to simply try to get people thinking again about this problem: Who is poor in America; what are our neighbors who are disabled really like; do the poor want to continue to be unemployed; how difficult is it to be a young child living out all of those young years in hunger and dispair?

Part of what Jack and Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King and Lyndon Johnson, and to a more major degree that has been recognized, your former boss, Richard Nixon, part of what they did was to simply focus America's attention on the fact of poverty Once Americans came to grips with that and began to understand it, they were very supportive of major national efforts, including volunteerism as practiced in VISTA, to try to end that poverty. It seems to me that what we need to do again in America, and along with that, this time we need to assure people that the war will not end in 20 years, that the enemy is not going to run up the white flag of surrender by the year 2000, that it's going to be a long twilight struggle.

Well, we appreciate all of you being here with us today. Happy anniversary.

[Whereupon, at 1:45 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

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